

Incorporated's five programming categories: National Trends and Services, The Arts, Services to Youth, International Trends and Services, and Health and Human Services.

The National Trends and Services facet of the Columbus (GA) Chapter champions the idea of empowering both the individual and the community through events such as a week-long community celebration that illustrates the positive impacts of diversity and multiculturalism. Displayed everywhere from government centers to schools to churches, The Links, Incorporated promotes ethnic pluralism within the community.

In addition, The Links were the first to gather local black entrepreneurs and prospective customers together in order to explore shared interests and encourage the potential for reciprocal benefits. The organization also takes the time to honor the lifeblood of local communities: trash collectors, school bus operators, postal carriers, and cafeteria workers. It seeks to recognize every aspect of a community, understanding that everyone deserves respect and gratitude for the vital roles they play in keeping the community afloat.

The International Trends and Services arm of the Columbus (GA) Chapter brings resources to countries across Africa through well-building and providing clean birth kits to those in Uganda and survival kits to women in Haiti. The organization's dedication to domestic and international service showcases the depth of its commitment to community betterment through public service.

The Columbus (GA) Chapter has instituted numerous programs under its Services to Youth facet, including a mentor program for kids in kindergarten to young adults in college. Additionally, Services to Youth promotes the values of higher education by raising interest in STEM education and career paths by awarding scholarships, creating endowments, and supporting Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

In line with its mission to promote cultural awareness through The Arts program, the Columbus (GA) Chapter partners with a number of arts institutions, such as museums, art councils, symphonies, and educational institutes to reinforce the importance of a strong minority presence in the art community.

Last, but certainly not least, the Health and Human Services facet of the Columbus (GA) Chapter works to implement and maintain community services to address the disparities in health conditions negatively impacting minorities. In this regard, the Columbus (GA) Chapter has joined forces with Linkages to Life, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Walk for Healthy Living, and the National Childhood Obesity Initiative.

Through the wisdom and strong leadership of its past fourteen presidents, the Columbus (GA) Chapter has given back so much to the African-American community and, in turn, the community as a whole. Today, the Chapter is led by current president, Olive Gibson Vidal-Kendall and boasts 33 spirited and outstanding members who provide over 1,500 hours of service each year.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing 50 years of incredible and inspiring work by the Columbus (GA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated. The services this organization has provided to the greater Columbus community are immeasurable and there is no doubt in my mind that

The Links, Incorporated will continue its worthy mission of promoting hope and prosperity for years to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I was traveling with President Obama and was unable to be present for Roll Call Vote numbers 552 and 553, the Motion to Recommit and Final Passage of H.R. 5781, The California Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2014.

Had I been present, I would have voted Yes on Roll Call 552 and No on Roll Call 553.

HONORING ATTORNEY WILL ELLIS PITTMAN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Attorney Will Ellis Pittman.

Attorney Pittman was born and raised in Tutwiler, MS. Mr. Pittman is 51 years old. He is the owner and managing member of Pittman & Associates, PLLC law firm in Clarksdale, Mississippi where he also serves as the first African-American County Prosecutor for Coahoma County. Attorney Pittman also serves as the board attorney for the Tunica County Board of Supervisors and is the first African-American to represent the Tunica County Board of Supervisors. Attorney Pittman is recognized amongst family, his community, and his colleagues as a man of wisdom, service, a generous spirit, and passion. He regularly attends and serves on the finance committee of the Galena Missionary Baptist Church in Tutwiler, Mississippi which he grew up in and joined at eight years of age.

Ellis attended and graduated from public high school in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. After earning his high school diploma, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. While in the Marine Corps, Ellis married his high school sweet heart, and they had two (2) children. After being honorably discharged from the Marine Corps, Ellis returned to his home town in Tutwiler.

However, he was unable to find employment anywhere in the delta area. Ellis returned to work and earned a living on the plantation in Tallahatchie County where he grew up. Ellis worked six (6) sometimes seven (7) days a week to provide food, shelter, and the bare necessities for his family. He always knew that if given the opportunity, he would provide them with a better way of life.

After working one full year and saving every penny that he could, Ellis departed for Dallas, Texas where he obtained a job with a janitorial service, cleaning grocery stores at night. Within two months Ellis saved enough funds for a deposit and first months' rent on an apartment. He then returned to Mississippi to get his wife and child and they returned to Dallas, Texas. Within six months, the store at which

Ellis was employed took notice of his hard work and daily attendance and the store manager offered him a job as an apprentice baker that provided health insurance, dental, and vision benefits for both him and his family. With this break, Ellis used the extra earnings to provide a better place for his family to stay. Within six months, Ellis had worked his way from an apprentice baker to a journeyman baker and was able to provide his family with the kind of things that he had always dreamed of having.

Although he excelled in his employment, Ellis realized that in order to do more for his family he would have to obtain a college education. At the same time, Ellis desired to return home to be with his elderly father who became ill. So, he applied for and was hired with the Mississippi Department of Corrections as a correctional officer trainee.

He then made plans to attend Mississippi Valley State University to obtain a college degree. Prior to applying to Mississippi Valley State University, the Pittman's home caught on fire in which Ellis received second and third degree burns over a large portion of his body. His wife received severe burns as well. After a month, she passed away from the injuries she sustained from the fire. Ellis remained in the Greenville Burn Center for a month and half before he was released. After a short period of time, he returned to his place of employment at the Mississippi State Penitentiary. The home that he had purchased for his family had burned down, so the Department of Corrections provided him with a house on the ground for him and his two minor sons to live.

At this point, he made the decision not to attend Mississippi Valley State University due to the drive because he would have to commute. Being a single parent and still having to work, Ellis applied to Delta State University which was closer to where he was living at the penitentiary and he could make the daily commute. He commuted five days a week for three years until he graduated from Delta State University with a degree in criminal justice and political science.

Prior to graduation from Delta State University, Ellis applied to law school at Mississippi College, Thurgood Marshall School of Law, and the University Of Mississippi School Of Law. He was accepted for admission at all three law schools. However, he chose to attend the University of Mississippi—School of Law due to the financial aid available for African-American applicants. After obtaining his law degree and license to practice law, Ellis returned to the Mississippi Delta from Memphis, Tennessee and opened Pittman Law Office in Clarksdale, Mississippi in 1996 where he continues to practice to this day.

Ellis has given countless young lawyers, that have recently graduated with no experience and unable to find a job, a position at his law office to give them a start. He realized that most people will do well if given the chance which he learned from personal experience when he needed someone to give him a chance. There has not been a time when a newly admitted lawyer came to Ellis looking for job and was turned down for employment.

Ellis' practice has included representing countless individuals in cases for excessive force, employment discrimination, criminal defense, family law, as well as personal injury and wrongful death.

Attorney Will Ellis Pittman's work ethic, passion, dedication, dependability, and service

have made him synonymous with being one of the best, if not the best, attorney around. At the end of the day, Ellis is recognized for his service to God, his family, his country, his community, and the people that seek his help.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Attorney Will Ellis Pittman for his dedication to serving this great state and country.

**HONORING SHARON MENDOZA
DOUGHTY**

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Sharon Mendoza Doughty, who passed away on November 19, 2014 following a long battle with cancer. A pioneering rancher, conservationist, teacher, winemaker and a natural leader, Ms. Doughty was a positive force within the local community.

Sharon Doughty grew up on her parents' historic B Ranch on the Point Reyes Peninsula. After the passing of her second husband, Bill Bianchini Jr., in the early 1980s, she took over the daily operations of their 800-acre dairy. Transitioning from a career as an accountant and teacher, Sharon Doughty became a full-time rancher with the help of her close family and friends.

Through her comprehensive knowledge of the dairy trade, Ms. Doughty became a natural leader within the North Bay dairy community and leaves behind a long legacy of positive impacts. The depth of her commitment to Marin County agriculture united fellow ranchers and helped to propel their products into national markets. A dedicated advocate for the preservation of local agricultural lands, Ms. Doughty served two terms as the president of the Marin Agricultural Land Trust and one term as a member of the California Coastal Commission. She selflessly devoted her time and expertise to the Marconi Conference Center in Marshall and 4-H. Among her many honors, in 2007, Ms. Doughty was named the "Woman of the Year" for California's 6th Assembly District for her exceptional community leadership.

Mr. Speaker, Sharon Doughty's life teaches us that one woman can make a substantial difference. Her efforts will not soon be forgotten as much of her legacy lives on all around us in Marin County and beyond. It is therefore appropriate that we pay tribute to her today and express our deepest condolences to her husband Steve; daughters Kathleen von Raesfeld and Karen Taylor; brothers Joseph Mendoza Jr. and James Mendoza; grandchildren Audrey and Nina von Raesfeld, Camilla, William Joseph, and Eva Taylor; and nephew Will Clark.

**JAMES L. OBERSTAR MEMORIAL
HIGHWAY**

SPEECH OF

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2014

Mr. DeFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, Jim Oberstar was a true gentleman of the House who ably

represented Minnesota's 8th District for 36 years. He was a fixture of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Jim started as staff in the 1960s, became a Member in the 1970s, then served as Chairman of the Committee from 2007 to 2011. I was blessed to work, and sometimes ride, alongside Jim for many years. Given his many years of work to improve transportation in Minnesota and across the country, it is fitting that a portion of Interstate Highway 35 be renamed in his honor.

As a tireless advocate on transportation issues, Jim earned well-deserved admiration in many circles, including in my home state of Oregon. He accompanied me on tours to advocate for increased infrastructure investment. Jim truly understood the importance of investment as a way to create American jobs, improve safety, and build roads, bridges and transit systems to accommodate a 21st Century economy. His passion and leadership are evident in projects across the country.

Jim was also an avid cyclist, and I am grateful I had the opportunity to show him my state in 2007 during the Cycle Oregon event. He was one tough athlete, easily outpacing cyclists half his age. Jim was a champion of the road in more ways than one.

Like many people in Washington, DC, Minnesota and beyond, I feel fortunate to consider Jim not only a colleague, but a friend and a mentor. I only wish he had lived long enough to share all of his knowledge with the rest of us.

**RECOGNIZING THE HONORABLE
JAMES M. BATZER FOR 30 YEARS
OF SERVICE AS A JUDGE FOR
THE 19TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COURT OF MICHIGAN**

HON. BILL HUIZENGA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Honorable James M. Batzer and his commendable service to Benzie and Manistee counties as a Circuit Court Judge.

Judge Batzer served West Michigan as a circuit court judge for 30 years. His commitment to the people of West Michigan has been exemplified through his long and illustrious career.

After graduating from Wayne State University with his Juris Doctor, Judge Batzer chose to remain in Michigan to practice. Before his election to the 19th Circuit Court, Judge Batzer worked a number of different jobs helping Michigan's youth. From 1968–1975, he served as a Children's Protective Services Worker as well as a Juvenile Delinquency Case Worker. He then went on to become a Teaching Fellow at the Detroit College of Law, where he taught legal research and writing to first-year law students. In 1979, Judge Batzer served as an Assistant Attorney General for the state of Michigan as well. Judge Batzer was later elected to the 19th Judicial Circuit Court on January 1, 1985.

Judge Batzer has proven his dedication to the courts of Michigan throughout his career, and he has been a respected and prominent figure in the law community. From 1989–1995,

he served as a Member of the State Bar Committee on Criminal Jury Instructions, and he served as Chair of the committee from 1993–1995. He has also been a member of the Northwest Michigan Community Corrections Advisory Board from 1989–2010. Judge Batzer was later named as one of the least reversed trial court judges in criminal cases in Michigan by the Detroit Free Press, and was also profiled by the college textbook, Criminal Justice in America.

Judge Batzer stands as a shining example of the Michigan Judicial System. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Judge James Batzer for his service to the state of Michigan.

**IN HONOR OF STANLY COMMUNITY
COLLEGE'S NURSING PROGRAM**

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Stanly Community College's Annie Ruth Kelley Associate Degree Nursing Program for being ranked #1 in the United States by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing for schools of nursing that lead to entry-level Registered Nurse licensure.

Stanly Community College's Annie Ruth Kelley Associate Degree Nursing Program ranks first among 1,904 programs in the United States.

This innovative program utilizes unique education techniques such as instant messaging, flipped classroom opportunities, adaptive testing, and simulated clinical experiences in a simulation hospital. All of these techniques lead graduates of SCC's nursing program to be well-prepared to serve those in need across the region.

A strong education system is important to empowering our nation and Stanly Community College's Nursing Program is setting a standard of excellence that should be commended.

The impact that the Stanly Community College Nursing Program has on our local communities, and the state of North Carolina, is undeniable.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, on December 1, 2014, on Roll Call #532 on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended H.R. 5629—Strengthening Domestic Nuclear Security Act of 2014, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On December 1, 2014, on Roll Call #533 on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 3438—National Laboratories Mean National Security Act, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On December 2, 2014, on Roll Call #534 on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass S. 2040—Blackfoot River Land Exchange Act of